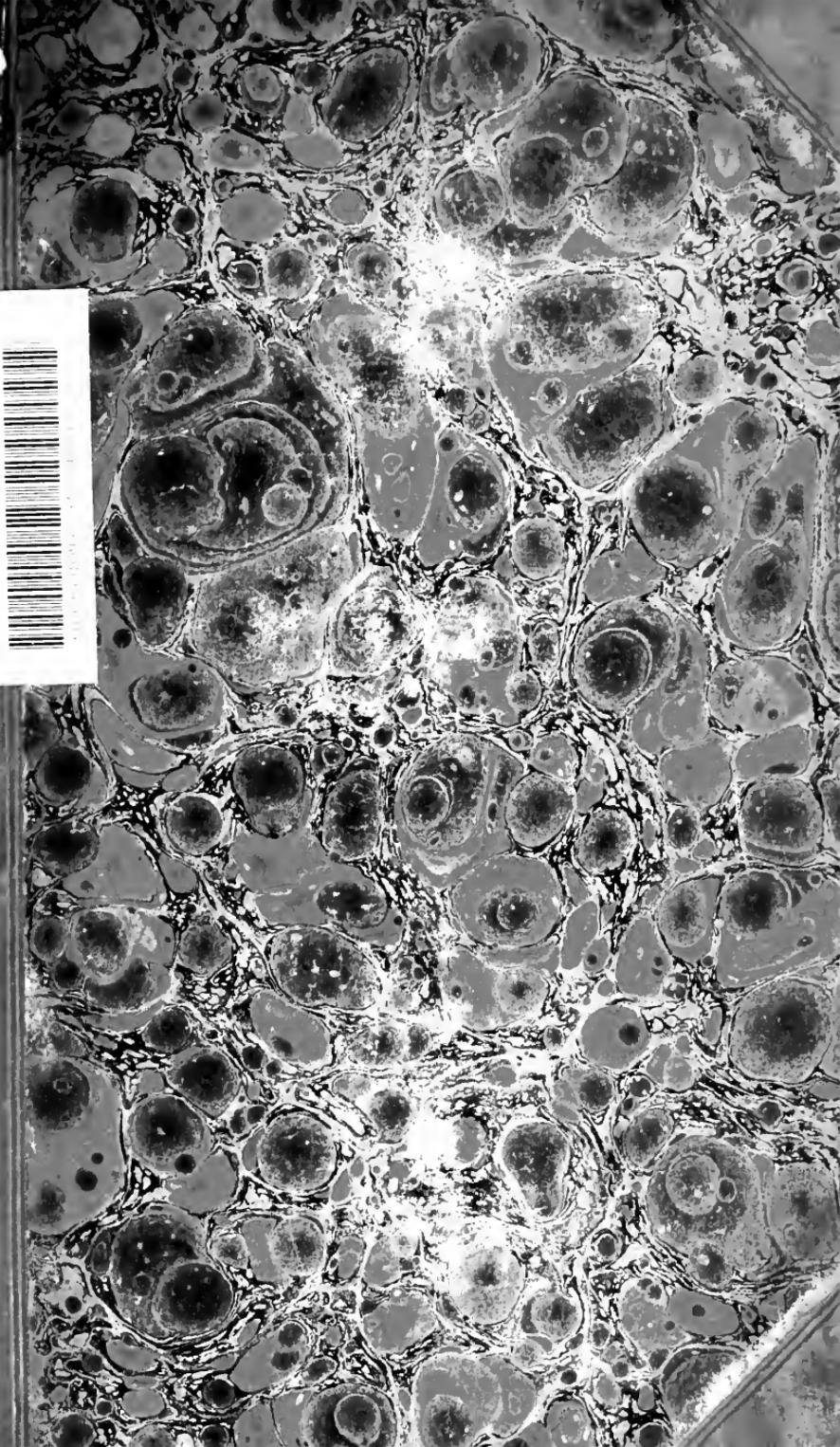


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Mrs Gilpin
From the Author

THE NIGHT-WATCH.

Emily Dickinson
Pauline Johnson
Rupert Brooke
John Greenleaf Whittier

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THE NIGHT-WATCH.

AN ARGUMENT.

BY

RICHARD TROTT FISHER.



LONDON:
WILLIAM PICKERING.
1845.

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THE NIGHT-WATCH.

THE sun was down : and as the timid moon
Unveil'd her pale face to salute the night,
Two trav'llers, who had toil'd through the hot day,
Stretch'd side by side upon a bank of heath,
Breathed welcome to the cool and tranquil hour.

Introduction
of the subject.

“ Hail, gentle Night ! that in thy mantle wrapp'st
The living world with all its toils and cares,
And nursest it to meet another day ;
How gladly do we hide our weary heads
Under the broody shadow of thy breast,
And court oblivion ! while the scene around
Has all put off its charm : the birds are mute,
The flowers are colourless ; and this fair earth,
Man's rich inheritance, one joyless blank.”

B

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Thus spake the younger of the twain, who loved
Beautiful Nature but for beauty's sake,
To feed therewith his fancy's appetite,
And wanton in its fulness. Oft he stray'd
The livelong day by river, wood, and glen,
Or climb the mountain-peak to gaze adown
Upon the lovely landscape. Nor did less
The elder dote on beauty; but therein
He read the symbol of divinity—
Mind's visible token; and the while he fixed
His eye on earth-born order, there he mark'd
Some quality of spirit and of heaven,
Where his heart rested.

In his curious youth
He had soar'd high on Contemplation's wing,
Above the palpable concrete, and sought
The viewless essence of the living soul:
And for his pastime had assay'd to note
Within the limits of pedantic rhyme
His devious difficult way, while he would trace
Its origin and attributes and end.
Thus in the leisure of maturer age
A passion as of youth still urged him on,

The rugged story of material things
To bind in measured language apt and brief,
As 'twere in the soft trammels of the Muse ;
For he had sworn her fealty, and for this
Had wander'd forth into her pleasant haunts.
And thus the fellow-trav'lers held their way,
Gath'ring fair images from all they saw,
While the light lasted. Then, at fall of night,
When one spake welcome to the oblivious gloom,
The other, as a father chides his son,
With kind rebuke persuasive thus replied.

“ Forgive, dear friend, the monitory tone
That rules the voice of age, nor deem it harsh,
All be it chime not with fantastic youth.
Together we have quaff'd the sparkling morn ;
Together loiter'd o'er the mellow noon ;
And sipt together the still balm of eve :
And what to me was sweet therein methought
Was no less sweet to thee : the scented air,
The verdure-varied landscape, all distinct
With beauteous characters of life and health,
The elegance of all that moved around—

The headlong torrent and the smiling lake,
Quick-nibbling flocks and lazy-marching kine,
Ravish'd our outward senses ; and it seem'd
Our hearts were tuned to the same harmony,
And throbb'd accordant. But what now I hear
Bewrays the thoughtless appetite of youth,
That snatches at the fruit which nearest blooms,
Unlearn'd of aught beyond. For who would thus
Surrender all unquestion'd the fair night,
As the waste birthright of oblivion ;
But that he hath not learnt to gather there
The richest fruits of wisdom ? Much I bless
The glorious Sun, without whose generous aid
Our body's life were as our body's death,—
No season for the soul to till and sow
For its own proper harvest. I bless too
The glorious Sun, for that his genial rays
So deck and paint this little field of earth—
Our body's heritage—that all is joy
Within its close domain. But when the Sun
Hath hid his dazzling beams, 'tis then our eyes
Can pierce into the open realms of space ;
Wherein our bodiless uncumber'd spirits
May one day travel free, in nearer view

Night opens
to our view
the greatest
works of
Nature.

Of beatific glory : and e'en now,
From this far spot, our hungry souls may feast
On heavenly elements, and dimly trace
A shadow of the universal God."

E'en as he spake, up sprang the zealous youth,
As starting from a dream, and for awhile
Stood motionless and gazed upon the heavens.
" If this be so—and that it is yon star
It may be nightly tells, while I, intent
Upon the sluggard's drowsy game, bar out
Its glowing tidings, and am no more learn'd
Of heavenly lore than the down-grazing ox—
But oh ! I rouse me ! and no more, I swear,
Shall wily sleep creep o'er me, while the night
Unfolds the book of Heaven, till my eyes
Have read therein its wondrous history.
But thou ! my friend, whose curious agile soul
Flits thro' the expanse of nature far and near,
Culling all knowledge from her open flowers,
And living for thyself a secrete store
Of purest wisdom—if I e'er have caught
The honied drops that oozed from thy full heart,
As for my daily bread, and follow'd thee

E'en as a son his sire,—be now, as erst,
My teacher and my guide.”

The old man smiled,
And said ; “ The boon thou ask’st I fain will grant :
For what so sweet a task—so heavenly sweet,
As to teach wisdom ! ’Tis indeed a gift
Which nought diminishes the giver’s store ;
While him that takes it doth enrich tenfold
Beyond earth’s riches. Nor thou, Spirit of song,—
Thou who so long hast haunted fairy realms,
And animated strange unnatural shapes
To stir men’s passions,—wilt thou now disdain
The form of living truth ; which, by thy grace,
Shall with its simple beauty more delight,
Than were it trick’d in the most gorgeous trim
Of the bright East, or mantled in the stole
Of stately Rome or Greece. But only thou
Consort and blend thee with that purer Spirit,
That was at the beginning, ere the birth
Of aught created, resting in the essence
Of uncreated and eternal Being :
Whence, with the spring of active energy,
It flow’d abroad into the nascent world,

To mix and mould and animate the whole.
 So may'st thou thrive in such high fellowship !
 And lead me on thro' Nature's farthest realms,
 Amidst the eldest of material things,
 And guide me as I go ; that I may see
 What obvious is to sense, and seeing, know
 Their mutual fitness and fair quality,
 And cry aloud their one Original."

He paused and stood awhile in anxious guise ;
 Now gazing round upon the things of Earth,
 Scarce visible amid th' o'erreaching gloom ;
 Now peering far beyond the shades of night,
 Where myriad stars lit up the vault of Heaven :
 Then in a small clear accent thus began.

" How hard it is for brief and puny man
 To tamper with the bounds of Time and Space !
 Yet not a thing that meets his daily sense,
 —Holds it a shape by Nature's work, or man's,
 Or brute or animate,—but would he trace
 Its history, and know from whence it came,
 Its age, its quality, from cause to cause
 He journeys upwards, as his learning serves,

Every thing
 that is, has its
 ultimate cause
 beyond our
 sense.

Perchance to some vast law, whose Maker still
 Rests in obscurity ; alone unmade,
 The universal spring ; himself unseen,
 But by his works confess.

No law, how-
 ever univer-
 sal, can be
 deemed an ul-
 timate cause,
 unless it have
 the attributes
 of the Deity.

Nor deem, in pride,
 Though, standing on the vantage-ground of lore,
 Thou e'en may'st mark aright some simple law
 Wide as the universe, innate within
 The elements of matter, reasoning whence
 Thou canst approve the order of the world
 To be, as of necessity, the same
 We see, in motion, form, and quality,
 That thou hast found the primal cause of things.
 For whence those elements, and how subject
 To that strong law ? Which if it be not God,
 Complete in power, by whom at first they were,
 And in whom live and move, a stronger law
 Must still be found beyond ; itself of God,
 Unless it be eternal, uncreate,
 Omnipotent ; then is it GOD indeed.

The interven-
 tion of agen-
 cies between

And what, if it be found, as well it may,
 That between Him and this material world

Are intermediate ministries, impress'd
Or delegate, which work dependently
Each upon each, in such nice harmony
That error is impossible? Shall we
Who mark this harmony, and trace the cause
Finitely visible, by which it works
Unchanging and infallible—shall we
Call that necessity which is in sooth
Obedience? Be it then necessity:
Not of itself, but of those elements—
The soulless elements in which it is,
And without which were not. What is it then?
What—but the easy undiverted flow
Of their Creator's power?—the farther this
Remote, its greater excellency proved.
As if a man, (to mix small things with great,)
Versed in the science of elastic spheres,
Intent to hit a mark upon a plane
Where several balls lie scatter'd up and down,
Should wanton in the surety of his skill,
And strike a ball with such nice mastery,
That starting indirect it falls oblique
Upon another, which now takes a course
Straight for a third; and thus they all are sped

the prime
Cause and an
effect proves
an excellency
of power.

Each upon each in order ; till the last
 Plumps on the mark, by a less cunning hand
 So obvious to the first. "Tis thus God works,
 Lavish of means, still of his end secure.

By tracing
remote causes
we assert this
excellency.

Then go, Philosopher, search Nature's ways,
 Pile cause on cause, and multiply His skill
 Whose hand hath framed such far dependencies :
 Lest, like the ignorant, we deem him near,
 An object of our petty sense, or charge
 His goodness for our daily wants and cares—
 The creatures of ourselves. But let us bow
 In wonderment, while from their eldest birth
 We trace the forms of things, as best we can,
 And gather thence his glorious attributes.

The begin-
ning of
created
things.

In the beginning, ere a thing was made,
 If Space and Time then were essentially,
 They had their being in the mind of God ;
 Incomprehensible to us, who mark
 And measure them by since created things.
 In His one Soul had reason, love, and power,
 Rested eternally ; but love prevail'd,
 And God no longer will'd to be alone :

Then reason plann'd creation, over which
Power shed a genial virtue—and it was.

What Thrones and Precedoms rose subordinate,
First-born to life, celestial substances
Of spirit, free of earthy particle
Which yet was not,—if any such there were
By God's full grace,—and for what ministry
They were and are, it is not our's to seek.
Our carnal sense is impotent of all
Beyond carnality, and reason shrinks
From sporting on where carnal senses fail.
Enough if we can mark aright what is
Within our sense, and argue thence one Spirit.

Of spiritual creatures we know nothing.

First then we see the sun, the moon, the stars,
In form and action of all things we know
The ancientest. But think not that they came
Straight from the proper hand of God himself
So shaped and poised by his primeval work :
Lest some philosopher, more skill'd than thou,
Should trip thee while thou deem'st thy step so sure,
And teach thee how they took the forms they hold
By their own energies, spontaneous

Of material creatures, the oldest forms we know are the heavenly bodies,

which, however, were not created

of these forms originally, but took them in the course of time, by the instinct properties of their own parts;

And irresistible ; and prove their place
And several motions, such as now they seem,
To be as but of yesterday, the work
Of their own instinct virtues, acting all
By certain laws which rule their destiny.
For know this globe of water, earth, and air
Is soluble to atoms most minute,
Of simple substance, various quality :
Which, severally set to wander free,
Would mingle everywise among themselves,
And meeting other creature elements
Of heat, and all the subtile essences
Pervading space, would gain new property
By chemic fusion or cohesive force,
Condensed and crystallized. Thus, in the lapse
Of countless ages, such another globe
Might be remoulded by the soulless force
Of things material, as we see this now,
Of solid, liquid, and ethereal mass.
Which, that it was so form'd, concrete and shaped
By the brute nature of its simple parts
Growing with time, if that thou know'st it not,
Go search within the caverns of the earth,
And read it storied in her granite block,

And on the tablet of her bedded soils.
 There mark them in their generations laid,
 The sport of fire or flood ; and patient still
 Of heat and wet, and all free elements
 That may assail them in their quietude,
 And loose perchance their fetter'd particles
 To roam again in unobstructed space.

and by those properties may return again to their elements.

But that thou mayst not deem it hard to think
 That these gross things of shape and size and weight
 Are compound of such light material,
 Look at the coal that blazes on thy hearth ;
 How quick it hurries from its lumpish state,
 And flees away in native particles,
 Impalpable to sight and touch ! Or watch
 Familiar water, as cold serves or heat,
 Mark how it settles into rocky ice,
 Or steals away in vapour ! Granite thus
 And adamantine ore before fierce heat
 Would rush into their elemental forms.

Which, from what we observe of matter, it is easy to conceive ;

Of such then know this solid earth once was,
 Of such her sister planets ; it might be
 As learned men have shewn, diffuse throughout

and that all matter once existed in a state of vapour.

The solar space, a vapoury world of fire :
A host of several atoms, unconfused,
Chasing around an axial firmament.
Which by their own innate activities,
Toward their centre gathering mass and heat,
The particles that wander'd more remote
Cool'd and condensed into the forms we see,
This Earth, those planets, running onward still
The passive course their atoms ran before.

In the present condition of matter we may observe the System of the Sun and Planets.

But first to note aright what now we see :—
This fair round Earth, which on its axle whirls,
And holds an onward course, continually
Throughout our time marking the days and years,
Is one of a celestial family,
Whose head we call the Sun. The wondrous Sun !
Who looks so like a god to our weak sense,
That men have worshipt him ! Though he, in sooth,
Is but a creature of like dignity
With each and all the myriad host of stars
Which speck night's azure scene. The wondrous Sun !
From him be our beginning : but, in vain
We strive to fathom his primeval source ; . . .
How in the depth of time his sovran fire

Was kindled, to dispense continual heat
Through countless ages, and to burn on still !
Poised in mid-heaven, as to us it seems,
He rests essentially. Around him move,
Within one plane of space, the wand'ring stars,
Of which the Earth is one ; whose seeming path
Perplex'd the astronomers of olden time,
As if they moved at random, here or there,
Forward or backward. But the wit of man
Hath traced the clew at last, and found their ways
Divinely regular. All run their rounds
With mutual harmony of place and time.

First, Mercury—so men have named the star
Which, like a favourite child by his fond sire,
Wheels his near course about the parent Sun.
Him, when the flagging herb at eventide
Tastes its first dew, or at the chilly dawn,
Like the brief lord of twilight you may see,
Now following fast from the black shades of night,
Now heralding the morn.

Mercury.

Bright Venus next,
Most beautiful of all the host of heaven,

Venus.

Smiles brilliance through the darkness. She as well
Follows or leads the radiant Lord of day ;
But at remoter distance ; that at times
The love-sick maid may sit and sigh to her
Through half the pensive night. Full oft the bard
Hath tuned his lyre to honour her ; so like
The queen of beauty doth she charm his sense !

Gaze while ye may ; for oft the jealous Sun
Flings his bright beams round this celestial pair,
And bars the sight of Earth's fond denizens.

The Earth. At measured distance next this genial Earth,
On which we live and move, from which we mark
The boundless fields of Heaven, and urge our thought
Throughout all space, this spot which we inhabit,
A star like other stars, holds on its course
Around the Sun ; while still around itself
The fair attendant Moon revolving too
Makes our night beautiful.

Mars.

Then fiery Mars !

Whose aspect red and bloodlike men once thought
Look'd war and slaughter : learn'd in later days

To trace the cause of things, no more they read
Destruction in his eye, but mark him form'd,
Like this our goodly Earth, of seas and lands,
Whose ocreous surface, unobscured by clouds,
Pours back the Sun's red rays, while his white poles
Proclaim eternal snow. He too perchance
Is tenanted by intellectual life,
Breathed by the spirit of primeval love.

Next, but at double interval, is seen Jupiter.
Stupendous Jupiter; to whom this earth,
With all its weary leagues of land and sea,
Is as a pea to the plump orange-fruit !
Thrice in the time which marks our day and night,
He whirls upon his axle ; thrice renewes
To his own denizens—if such there be—
The shades of evening and the beams of morn.
But lest, more distant from the fount of light,
Five times the space betwixt the Sun and us,
So frequent night should intercept good work,
Four beauteous satellites around him watch,
And gathering lustre from the opposite Sun,
Profitless gloom relieve. Attended thus,

In twice six years, such years as mark our time,
He rounds his orbit.

Saturn.

Saturn next appears !

For whose long journey round the distant Sun
Scarce thrice ten years suffice. About his waist
Two fine concentric rings of solid mass
Whirl as he whirls, and hold their separate place
Apart in curious balance. Underneath
They spread a zone of long-enduring gloom,
A dire eclipse, that veils the face of day
Through fifteen tedious years. Still let us own
Nature's munificence : as the just Sun
The alternate sides of these o'er-arching rings
Illuminates, how must the habitants
On each glad side in turn admire the night,
While their bright bows are waning to the West,
Or crescent from the East ! Nor more the while
Doth utter darkness through long winter's nights
Bar active purpose on the opposite side :
Though the blank rings be mute, seven orbs above
Are eloquent of light, and the sad gloom
Consoling promise a return of day.

Such are the stars—the wand’ring lights of Heaven—
That man’s unaided ken hath pored upon
Through his brief time, since erst in Syria’s plains,
Artless and weaponless, he kept afield
His unpenn’d flocks and herds, and watch’d the night.
Oft, as he mark’d their strange extravagance,
For such it seem’d, nor knew the simple law
That erewhile fashion’d them and ruled them still,
Therein his speculative fancy read
Visions of wondrous import, and forewarn’d
The fate of empires. But of later years
His sense, befriended by his handy skill,
Hath conquer’d native weakness; and his eye
Is led to pry into the realms of space,
And gather truths that men of yore ne’er dream’d.
Thus in the twofold interval, which lies
Between the paths of Mars and Jupiter,
The baffled sage would fain have mark’d some star,
To justify his rule of mutual distance;
And fondly charged the harmony of things,
That this fair space was void. O weak of sense,
Bow down thy head, and own that all is right,
All regular, though thou perceivest it not!
For in this very space, deem’d void so long,

The four ul-
tra-zodiacal
Planets.

Four lesser stars, as in the stead of one,
Are found to wheel their course around the Sun,
Fulfilling order.

Uranus.

Further on in space,
Beyond the extremest path of distant Saturn,
Order still lives : though men had mark'd it not,
Till one of subtler parts proclaim'd of late
The being of a planet, so remote
As well might mock our curiosity.
Nathless he spied it faring through the waste,
As far beyond the farthest road of Saturn
As Saturn from the centric orb of light.
He marked its course, and measured well its ways,
And claim'd it subject to the sov'reign sun,
Though distant still obedient ; sweeping through
Its chilly period by strictest rules
Of time and distance, all in unison
With the long-noted harmonies of Heaven.

The proximate cause of
the order of
the Solar
System.

But whence these harmonies ? and what the power
That watches through the vasty deep of space
Age after age unsleeping, lest some star
Should wander devious, and borne athwart

Meet other planets with concussion dire,
And spreading havoc in its lawless course,
Confound and wreck the company of Heaven.

In every elemental particle
Of which material substance is compact
There lives an instinct-energy, by which
Each draws each other and is drawn in turn,
Stronger the nearer, weaker more remote.
By this the fluid globes of Heaven erst took
Their spheric forms, which solid since have grown
By the cohesion of their concrete parts.
But lest ye should suppose, as well ye may,
That such an active influence had borne
All particles to form one single mass ;
Know that each atom is withal endued
With passive quality, by which it rests
Eternally, or set to move in space
Eternally moves on, obedient.
And that, thus qualified, and thus instinct,
Each atom was with motion once impress'd ;
But whether at the origin of things,
Or consequent upon some older work --
As it might seem of wide-distensive heat --

General
active energy
of material
atoms.

General
passive pro-
perty.

Motion im-
pressed, or
acquired.

It is not ours to trace. Enough to say,
That ere the globes were form'd, this motion was,
In such direction and such quantity,
That this with their own mutual force combined
Bore the free atoms round a point of rest,
With such consistent equability,
That all that myriad myriad host might seem
Endued with unity : as oft I ween
In childhood ye have seen a well-spun top
Sleep on its axle.

Peculiar qualities of the atoms,

Thus would they have held
Their several being and moved on till now,
And Earth had been unform'd, and the fair Moon,
And planets with their beauteous satellites,
And e'en the godlike Sun : but the same Mind
That fix'd the general law by which they moved,
Pregnant of purpose, fix'd their natures too
And proper kinds, of which they were and are.
These, few and simple, are so rarely fraught
With virtues, and adapted each to each,
That finely sensitive of heat and cold,
And other subtle essences that flow,
Or radiate through universal space,

and their mutual relations.

They take antipathies and sympathies,
Dilated or condensed. Thus, everywise
Press'd to commingle, by their proper laws
They have combined, in all variety
Of form and substance, such as now we see,
To form the globes of Heaven.

Their ten-
dency to
form them
selves into
globes.

And this the more
To comprehend,—how the loose particles,
True to their cause, combined as one to build
Our beautiful round fabric of the Earth—
Mark how at this late day, the elements,
That still move free around her solid crust,
Do the like duty to repair her form,
Should violence invade. Oft, as you gaze
Through the warm azure of the viewless air,
Which seems so clear and void, a chilly blast
Sweeps through the scene, and on a sudden, lo !
A vapoury image streaks the bright expanse :
And what was all dry air is now fulfill'd
With wat'ry atoms. First they hold apart,
As doubting each of each ; but temper'd soon
They grow familiar, and together run
By their own energies, in ponderous drops

Illustration
of this
tendency.

Conglobing, till the lightsome air beneath
 No more sustains them ; then they fall, to form
 The globe of earth, c'en as they form'd themselves.

Heat—

analogous to light—

Radiates in all directions,

and modifies all matter.

But more of this anon.—Behoves us first
 To ponder o'er the ways of heat, twin-born,
 As it might seem, with light ; so like the twain
 Hold on their course through unobstructed space
 Perceptible, so like together lurk
 In cold dark mass eluding all our sense.
 Sped from its source—be this the solar fire,
 Or kindled of our earthly elements,—
 Swift through the void the bursting flood of heat
 Pours in all ways, till its divergent power
 Is lost in open emptiness. But where
 Creatures of matter thwart its onward course,
 In these it enters—as a messenger
 Sent from their sovereign Lord, and spurs them on
 To execute his purpose, and discharge
 Their several offices : nor need they more
 Persuasion ; but as each and all conceive
 Its influence, they compare their harmonies,
 And nicely blending modify the forms
 Of brute material.

But may we trace
 The principle of this mysterious power
 To its vast source ?—Know then, the Sun's hot rays
 Are of like kind with our terrestrial,
 The same but in degree, obedient too
 To the same laws : thus what he always gives
 He always loses. How so constant then
 Year after year pours he unminish'd heat,
 Nor, like our earthly fire, burns out nor cools ?
 It were not wise to guess at unknown ways,
 Or well might we suppose an atmosphere
 Of fluid loose obsequious particles
 To close upon the solid mass of th' Sun ;
 Whose native temperature, as they drop near,
 Dissolves their quality ; then off they flee
 Discharging light and heat, and seek a place
 Remote and fitted to their subtler form :
 And there they wander ; till, condensed by cold
 Into their pristine weight, they fall again—
 Again to be dissolved : E'en as we mark
 The vapoury particles which this dank Earth
 Throws off continually and drinks again,
 Balancing moisture. Thus might we suppose
 The Sun's heat balanced, and unminish'd still.

The Sun is
 the main
 Source of our
 heat.
 His heat
 seems of like
 kind with all
 other,

and we might
 therefore sup-
 pose him to
 be cooling.

Hypothesis as
 to the natural
 process by
 which his
 heat may be
 kept up.

But we do
not know
that it has
been kept
up through
all time,—
therefore by
analogy we
may conclude
that he has
cooled.

and was once
at his greatest
heat.

But say how man's brief race can know that heat
Year after year unminish'd, in all time ?
As well the fly that flutters through one day
Might deem the flower unfading. Rather hold
The Sun himself as changing year by year,
And transient as the flower to Him who counts
All time as yesterday, and marks alike
All generations of created things—
A short-lived flow'r, or an enduring sun.
If not, approve some adverse quality
In the Sun's fire, which scorns the law of heat,
Such as we note it in terrestrial fire.
But if thou canst not, then conclude with me—
The Sun himself hath cool'd through countless time :
And that an age once was, at which his heat
—Or by combustion, or the initial stroke
Of independent Will,—was at its prime,
Of infinite intensity compared
With these congenial rays he sheds to day ;
To which the vital current of our hearts,
The standard whence we measure heat and cold,
—For these are one, and vary but in grade
Upwards and downwards from our living blood,—
Is so attempered by our curious frame.

Where then was matter? where the Earth, the Moōn,
 The planets and their busy satellites,
 Which range within the limits of his power?
 As still the stubbornest material forms,
 Or granite rock or adamantine ore,
 By the invasion of excessive heat
 Fly from their concrete nature, and put on
 A form minutely rare, to all the winds
 Scatter'd abroad, so then created mass
 Held not a form, such as we see it now,
 Dense and conglomerate, but wide-diffuse
 Throughout the solar realm wander'd at large
 In particles repulsive each of each,
 Fulfilling all the interstellar void.

Then the
 matter of the
 Planets must
 have been
 held in solu-
 tion and
 aeriform.

But, though this offset planetary mass
 Were thus so keenly passionate of heat,
 As to put on new nature, and fly off
 Into far space aeriform, yet thou
 Deem not that all create material
 Was therefore of like passion : for we note
 The various tempers of the things we know—
 Some of high heat capacious, still compact ;
 While others melt and quietly flow down ;

But other
 matter, even
 at that ex-
 cessive tem-
 perature held
 its compact
 form and
 central place.

Or spring apart with adverse energy,
E'en of a glow impatient. Thus it was,
While heat was at its prime and held aloof
All dissoluble matter spread around
Far from its centric home, that other mass
Was of such quality as still to drink
Excessive heat and still to rest in peace—
A patient mass of quintessential fire.

Our system's
condition of
equilibrium
at greatest
heat.

Now to descend from this high point of heat
Whence all began to cool. Our world was then
One spheroid of undivided form,
A single globe of monad particles
All bearing to one centre by one law
And borne by one rotation. But think not
That they were class'd at random—dense with rare
And rare with dense; for all were self-array'd
By their own quality, as centre-bound
By their own energy, the denser near
The rarer more remote; and in the midst
Press'd on all sides the densest held its place,
Cohesive and compact. And as they whirl'd
With one rotation, so the speed of each
Grew with its distance from the line of rest.

Now heat was shed all ways, and spent abroad :
 Which when our elemental world conceived,
 By the mere nature of its simple parts
 It waned from its huge bulk : and then the rim
 Of farthest particles, which roll'd without
 At greatest speed, bulging in empty space,
 Dropped towards the centre : but its speed remain'd,
 Too great at minish'd distance still to keep
 The simple round ; at which the particles,
 Unhinder'd from without, continually
 Flew off from the main host, and took a course
 Eccentrical, though still minutely near
 Their pristine circle. So thou oft hast seen
 A hurried wheel cast off the clinging mire ;
 Or when some damsel whirls her dripping mop,
 How the loose spray flies offward, farther still
 As she whirls faster.

Variation of such condition, as heat declined;

and separation of the extreme particles of matter;

Thus as time roll'd on,
 These offshot particles, so left in space,
 Multiplied constantly ; and when the main
 Receded, by their mutual instinct force
 They fell together and conform'd a ring.
 And so they might have held their even course,

and consequent formation of a planetary globe of solute matter;

And girt the heavens, with one continuous belt
Of ponderable matter circled round ;
But, as heat wasted, soon their dwindled bulk
Shrunk from the perfect span ; and, their close rank
Once broken, wider still the chasm grew,
Wider and wider ; till the long-drawn file
Was gather'd all around one central point,
Still journeying on as erst—a vasty globe
Of several atoms, bound by their own weight
To their own centre.

Which
necessarily
acquired a
rotatory
motion,

by which
planetary
satellites
might be
separated and
formed in
like manner.

Now since all moved on
With their own motion, and the speed of each
Was as its distance from the line of rest,
The farthest particles would fain have sped,
The nearest have held back, the common point
To which they now were bound. And thus it was,
Around that common point motion began :
Which—when this new-form'd globe, as heat declined,
Waned too from its first bulk—was speeded too,
And in like fashion other offset forms
Of elemental matter took their birth
And several being, leaving this in course
As this had left the main.

And thus went on
 The work of nature ; and in time were form'd
 The farthest planet and its satellites—
 First offspring of the centric mass, endued
 Each with its proper accidents of place
 And motion and rotation.—

The most re-
 mote planet
 the first
 formed ;

Now return
 To the first state of these free particles ;
 When, as was said, they form'd a several ring
 Circling the solar space. This, hour by hour,
 Drew to itself eccentric elements ;
 Till in due time, the main contracting still,
 Its distance wax'd so great, that they no more
 Obey'd its call, but kept their proper place,
 And took the figure of a second ring
 Around the parent sphere : and then a third—
 A fourth—and all the planetary forms
 Were left at measured distances—like buds
 On the same stem—and sped, within one plane,
 In one direction, by the self-same cause ;
 As like in face as children of one womb
 Stamp'd with the features of their common sire.

Then the
 others in the
 order of their
 distance in
 like manner.

The same
 cause pro-
 ducing their
 onward and
 rotatory
 motions in
 the same
 direction and
 within the
 same plane.

Thus then the several planets took their birth,
 And gave the like in turn : and thus, it seems,
 They might have multiplied their several forms
 Continually ; but that primeval Mind,
 Which erst contrived material quality,
 Knew each condition of material form,
 And all its works cry Wisdom. Thus it was,
 In the formation of the globes of Heaven,
 Lest without end they should be multiplied,
 A reasonable bound was set ; at which
 The cooling particles that form'd each globe
 Lost that repulsive energy which held
 Them wide-dilate in space, and passive lay
 Indifferent each to each, a liquid mass.
 And then, as heat diminish'd still, no more
 They dropt towards their centre, to fly off
 At minish'd distance and conform new globes,
 But held their perfect space, content, and moved
 Within themselves internally. Till heat
 Departing near the surface, some anon,
 Such was their temper, shot into a crust
 Of crystal mass compact ; thenceforth to form
 The base of all such lighter particles
 As flow'd without unsettled, and a bar

A limit set to
the multipli-
cation of the
planetary
satellites :
Prov. viii. 1.

consequent
upon the
native qual-
ties of the
material ele-
ments ;

which losing
their repul-
sive proper-
ties by the
diminution of
their temper-
ature, be-
came liquid
and after-
wards solid,
at the sur-
face of each
planet.

To the compress'd metallic elements,
Which held their place within by their own weight,
Still pregnant of fierce heat.

And thus each mass
Was fix'd of shape and bulk unchangeable :
And all the particles of each which moved
With their own motions, now were bound to move
In close compact together, all as one—
A single member of the host of Heaven ;
Set to fulfil eternal destinies,
And minister to intellectual good.

Thus the individuality of each planetary body was fixed, and thereby adapted to its purpose.

And on this rock I build my argument :—
How in the course of time unthinking mass
Has moved in perfect order, and gone on
To mix its elements, and change its forms,
And clothe itself with beauteous harmonies
Identical with Reason's finest work,
And all subservient to Reason's use—
MENTAL BEATITUDE : and on this base
I take my stand, and search if aught can be
The cause of reasonable work and good—
So vast, so universal,—not itself

Argument.

A cause must be commensurable with its effect both in quality and quantity.

Of wisdom and of goodness and of power
Commensurate: and as I find the work
In magnitude, so will I deem the cause.
But if, when I have strain'd my utmost strength
And noted all within my reach, beyond
Immeasurable heights shall still appear
Towering above—unfathom'd depths below,
All of like handiwork, and no end seen,
Then will I rest me and proclaim a cause
As ample as its work and of like kind,
Immense of wisdom, goodness, and of power.

The motion
and order of
the solar
system being
a reasonable
work, that is,
cognizable by
our reason,
must be the
effect of a
reasoning
cause,

First mark the motion of these globes of Heaven :
These cumbrous aggregates of lifeless mass
Yet move in order, subject to the laws
Of living reason : so that reasoning man
Can tell of all their devious winding ways,
And minute long before their time and place,
E'en as a prophet ! But would reasoning man—
Be he the wisest of the wise—foremark
The easy orbits of the feather'd brood
That skim around a solitary tower
Disporting through the day ;—or would he fix
The wild colt's circling track upon the lea ;—

In vain he contemplates their random ways.
Reason consorts not with unreasoning will
Nor knows its hazard work. As well the wretch
Dark from his mother's womb might strive to scan
The hues distinct upon a storied wall !
But one—whose eye hath hung upon the work
Of Raphael or Correggio, till his heart
Glows with bright beauty's image,—hath he e'er
Turn'd from the scene to ask, if he, who laid
The colours there in such variety,
So blent in harmony, himself could see ?
Thus, when we mark unthinking lifeless mass
Moving in beauteous order, all adapt
To our mind's faculty, and of like kind
With our own reason's product, we needs must
Confess a living Mover, reasoning
E'en as we reason, but of excellence
Proportion'd to his work.

and of a
cause which
reasoned as
we reason.

And thus by right
We commune with him, and essay to trace
The wonder of the work. So what we can,
We will : albeit we stand on this far speck
Bound for a twinkling, while his work is spread

The same
laws which
affect our
system
extend also

beyond its
limits.

Throughout all space for all eternity !
For lest one might suppose the single Power,
That made the elements of which our Sun
And his cognate dependents are compoünd,
And gave them quality, by which they took
Several forms and motions reasonable,
In the free course of nature, by such work
Was spent and satisfied, within these bounds
Resting confined, while others rule without ;—
Mark yonder star—the nearest let it be
Of all the lights of Heaven : there it bides
Night after night, unbending to the sway
Of our huge Sun ;—all potent though he be
To drag the monstrous planets in his train,—
Yet doth that star defy his mastery ;
And marks him only as a speck of light
Scarce visible. For know its place so far
Remote in space that all in vain we strive
To learn how far it is ; though we can mark
Each planet's place by veritable rule
And note its distance, be it most remote
Within the Sun's dominion. Thus betwixt
The farthest planet and this nearest light
That shines to us beyond, their lies a gulf

The distance
of the fixed
stars from
our Sun and
from each
other is im-
measurably
great :

Of space immeasurable : and as we prove
 The nearest of the myriad lights of Heaven
 Immeasurably far from us and our's,
 So we conclude them each as far from each
 As it from us. If then the nearest light
 Be thus immeasurably far from us,
 And each immeasurably far from each,—
 Where is the farthest ?

Yet, at that far point,
 In that remotest star, whose doubtful gleam
 Scarce vindicates its being to thy sense,
 Note as thou may'st a kindred character
 Stamp'd in its face, which tells its birth and being
 Congenial with thine own familiar Sun.
 This slender glimmering starbeam which would seem
 So insignificant of grand import,
 Brings tidings of a vast and wondrous truth
 To fill thy soul with reverence. Read with me
 Its simple history :

As one small drop
 Is of like kind and native quality
 With ocean's giant tide, so that faint beam

Yet there is
 evidence to
 shew that
 each Star is
 a creature of
 the same
 Creator as
 our Sun.

For the light
 of a star-beam
 is of like
 nature with
 the light of a
 sunbeam ;

Is of one nature with the dazzling flood
 That bursts upon us from the noonday Sun :
 A particle of unobstructed light
 Hath travell'd down from that stupendous height
 And rests within thine eye ! Now, question it,
 Gauge it, and measure it by a beam of th' Sun
 Let into darkness through minutest hole ;
 And thou wilt own them of like quality
 And sprung from a like source. Not otherwise
 Than, when the morn's clean breath from distant fields
 Wafts feeble odours, thou must needs confess
 The jasmine or the hyacinth or rose
 Flowering afar, e'en as they flower at home
 Within the precincts of thy garden range,
 Filling the air with fragrance.

Therefore
 the same
 Lord of light,
 who holds
 dominion
 in our system
 holds
 dominion
 likewise in
 all the visible
 stars, and in
 all space,
 through which
 the light
 passes, be-

Hence we learn—

That light, this subtle essence which direct
 Is pour'd upon us from the bounteous Sun,—
 Be it embodied in divergent streams
 Of proper particles, or be it nought
 But the mere creature of ethereal motion
 Quicken'd like music to our ready sense,—
 Whate'er it be, or of what elements,

This treasure of our being, without which
 All that we know of good and beautiful
 Were not for us existent,—this key-stone
 Of the proud arch whereby we scale to Heaven,
 So curiously moulded for our use
 That we seem made for it, and it for us,—
 This masterpiece of all its Maker's works,
 Which seems our own peculiar—dwells alike
 In that remotest star beyond our use,
 As excellent as in our proper Sun :
 And through the vast unfathom'd depth between
 The obsequious elements have pass'd it down
 To this far spot, unquestion'd, for it bore
 Their master's passport ! And what one star tells
 Is told alike by all the host of Heaven :—
 That He, who made the light and governs it,
 Holds his dominion, not as here or there,
 But in each star that shines, and all between,
 And everywhere in universal space !

tween them
and us.

Add too to this :—in the far fields of space,
 Beyond the solar realm, stars may be seen
 To hold communion, and intermove
 Each about each in certain periods,

We further
learn, from
the observed
motion of
certain fixed
stars, that
their material

particles are
endued with
a power of
gravitation
acting by the
same law as
the material
particles of
our system.

Determinable by the simple law
Which rules our Sun and his appendant globes.
Whence learn we—that same instinct energy
Which lives in these material elements
That form our Sun and planets—the key-note
Of all their harmonies—lives in those stars
Identical, and to the self-same work
Of perfect order tunes their elements.

Whence we
infer that the
same Creator
made and
orders
each and all
of such stars.

And thus we read in every star of Heaven—
That he who made material elements,
And erst impress'd them with this energy,
Has his dominion, not as here or there,
Serving respect to place or circumstance,
But in each star that holds a course in Heaven
Order'd unerringly : and this to us
Is everywhere in universal space.—

Hence,
limited as our
faculties may
be, we are
right to con-
clude the
omnipotence,
eternity, and
infinity, of
the prime
Cause of
things:
also His

“ Great Cause of all we see, and all we know,
And all we can believe to be ; if not
Omnipotent, how shall we fix thy power ?
If not eternal, when didst thou begin ?
If not all-present, where in endless space—
Endless to us—where is it thou art not ?
One principle of all material fact ;

Instinct alike in every grain of sand
That presses to the beach, as in the mass
That moves in farthest heaven ! instinct alike
Within the taper flickering at my side,
As in each star that twinkles visible
In the black vault of night ! inducing all
With calculable order, palpable
To reason though itself unreasoning ;
And thus concluded of an origin
Not of itself—brute—manifold—inert,
But active—single—and of reasoning sense,
And power commensurate to this vast work,—
To summon into being what was not ;
To fill void space with massive elements,
So qualified and temper'd, each to each,
In their simplicity, that of themselves
Running together, as it were by chance,
In myriad modes blent interchangeably,
They thus work out a long variety
Of changeful order, and subserve the while
To reasoning souls, their Maker's nearer kin,
After his likeness sense-indued to thrive
On mental competence and moral good.”

unity and
wisdom.

The old man paused, as in an ecstasy
Of adoration and high gratitude :
While he, the younger of the twain, surprised
Stood, like a mariner at break of dawn
Fresh in the view of some delicious isle,
Enchanted and perplex'd. "All hail!" he cried,
"Thou beauteous order ! as thou still roll'st on,
Silent, undevious, to thy Maker's word,
Spoke at thy first creation, listening still,
My soul shall feast upon thy harmony.
Ye noblest creatures of the universe—
Ye starry spheres, compact of living light,
Well might the wondering savage deem ye gods
And arbiters of fate ! But ye the while
Are but the ministers of Reason's word,
Self-composite of simple elements
Made in time past, and at their making stamp'd
With the full destiny of time to come,
Which ages shall unfold :—But when to end ?
Unerring order must be order still.
Shall it that had beginning have no end ?"—

We must not
suppose that
any material

To which in answer thus the elder spake :—
"Change is the order of material things,

And constancy is not : and he who plann'd
 The origin of system plann'd its end.
 Thus e'en within the span of our brief time
 Suns have been blotted from the map of Heaven :
 Involved it may be in the nebulous mass
 Of their appendant atoms, which before,
 In several planetary globes, revolved
 Round their bright centre and let through the light :
 Till, their course run, they dropp'd into the goal ;
 And now, combust to hostile elements,
 They struggle in confliction each with all :
 Hence, it may be, to find their peace at length
 In unity of motion, spinning round
 Their central axle, and regenerate
 Another world of planetary globes.

system, how-ever stable,
 will be eternal; its End
 is an element
 of its order.
 Fixed stars
 have been
 observed to
 disappear,

Know too—within the system of our sun
 There lurks an element of ruin, spread
 Throughout all space—ethereal particles,
 Inertly operant ; which clog the track
 Of the swift planets and retard their speed.
 So year by year they drop insensibly
 Toward the centre : and the hour shall come—
 Alld stant though it be, yet come it must—

and there is
 reason for
 believing in
 the existence
 of a resisting
 medium,
 which, if
 existent, is
 always ope-
 rating to the
 destruction of
 our system,

which must
inevitably
happen by
fire in the
natural course
of events.

When this fair earth; and all its beauteous things
 Of land and sea, with all its hidden mines
 Of crystal and of gold, and man's proud works—
 The records of his genius or his power,
 All, by one fierce contagion caught amain,
 Shall—like the stubble after harvest-home—
 Rush into vapoury forms of ash and smoke,
 And in black chaos lose the light of day.”*

He spake ;—and gently laid his head to rest,
 Secure beneath the canopy of night
 As in the chamber of his forefathers.
 The younger watch'd awhile ; till sense at last
 Sank impotent, and kindred shapes of Heaven
 Rose on his inner sight, with such sweet dreams
 As follow holy thought and high desire.

* “Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure ; they all shall wax old as doth a garment ; and as a vesture thou shalt change them and they shall be changed : but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.”—PSALM cii.



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